

be known under the next available name: *Loxops wolstenholmei* Rothschild, 1893.

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Notes on Philippine Birds, 10. On the validity of *Gerygone sulphurea rhizophorae* Mearns

by *Kenneth C. Parkes*

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Few authors have discussed the taxonomic status of the Yellow-breasted Wren-warbler (or Flyeater) *Gerygone sulphurea* in the Philippines. In his monograph of the genus *Gerygone*, Meise (1931) included the Philippine populations in a comprehensive species *G. fusca*. Mayr (1944) showed that subdivision of *fusca* into 4 species was a preferable treatment, with the Philippine populations considered to be conspecific with *G. sulphurea* (Type locality Solor, Lesser Sunda Islands). The oldest valid name available for a Philippine population is *G. simplex* Cabanis, 1872, from Luzon.

The name *Gerygone rhizophorae* was proposed by Mearns (1905), based on a series of 7 specimens from Mindanao. As pointed out by McGregor (1909: 448), Mearns inexplicably failed to compare his alleged new form with *simplex* from Luzon and other islands in the northern Philippines, but McGregor himself gave only a single character to differentiate *simplex* and *rhizophorae*,

namely the darker crown colour of *rhizophorae*, of which he saw only a single specimen. Meise (1931: 373), without having examined specimens but partly on the authority of a letter from J. H. Riley of the U.S. National Museum, believed *rhizophorae* to be unworthy of recognition. Furthermore, Meise stated that he could not separate Philippine *simplex* (and numerous other proposed subspecies) from *sulphurea* of the Lesser Sunda Islands on the basis of his material. He did not say how many Philippine specimens he had seen, but it could not have been very many, as he had examined only 25 skins of his comprehensive *sulphurea*, to which he assigned a range extending from the Malay Peninsula through the Greater and Lesser Sunda Islands to Borneo and the Philippines.

Mearn's *rhizophorae* seems to have been largely ignored (and inferentially synonymized with *simplex*) subsequent to Meise's paper. Peters (1939), although mentioning *simplex* and *rhizophorae*, followed Meise uncritically in calling all Philippine populations *sulphurea*. Finally, in 1959, Meyer de Schauensee & duPont, *contra* Meise, listed characters that differentiate *simplex* from *sulphurea*. They also examined a single specimen from Lake Lanao, Mindanao, which they described as agreeing "with Sumatra birds [*sulphurea*] in having gray [as opposed to white] lores and with Luzon birds in the amount of white in the tail" and continued "It is quite possible that Mearns [*sic*] name *rhizophora* [*sic*] based on a Mindanao bird [actually 7 birds] is valid." I have found no subsequent comment on the status of *rhizophorae*, and it was synonymized with *simplex* by duPont (1971: 303).

By utilizing the collection resources of the Delaware Museum of Natural History (DMNH) and the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), I have been able to study a larger and more geographically diverse series of Philippine *Gerygone* than was examined by previous writers. The material at the 2 museums will be considered separately because of an important difference in the age of the specimens. The DMNH collection consists entirely of recent specimens, less than 25 years old. In the AMNH series, on the other hand, there are only 5 "recently" collected specimens; 3 from Negros (1955), 1 from Mindoro (1966), and 1 from Saluag, southern Sulus (1971), obtained on exchange from DMNH.

At DMNH I compared 6 specimens from Luzon (type locality of *simplex*) with 3 from Marinduque, 2 from Mindoro, 10 from Cebu, 2 from Mindanao, and 18 from various islands of the Sulu Archipelago (see duPont & Rabor 1973 for localities). The combined series from Luzon, Marinduque and Mindoro is slightly but perceptibly paler and browner (less dark olive) dorsally than the series from Mindanao and the Sulus. There is a tendency for the southern birds to have the crown darker than the back; this is not true of all of the specimens in this series, but *none* of the northern birds exhibits this contrast. This colour difference between the 2 series is certainly not a striking one, and if this were indeed the only character to separate 2 Philippine races (as indicated by McGregor), I could support the suppression of *rhizophorae*. However, the loral character suggested by Meyer de Schauensee & duPont proves to be an excellent and consistent means of separating the northern (*simplex*) and southern (*rhizophorae*) Philippine populations of *Gerygone sulphurea*. All specimens of the northern sample have a conspicuous white area between the eye and the base of the bill. This mark is present in none of the southern sample. A few southern specimens have 3 or 4 small white or

partly white feathers at the very base of the bill, but in none does this white area extend anywhere nearly back to the eyes. Meise (1931) attributes to the letter he received from Riley the statement that a white "Supraloralstreif" is present in both *simplex* and *rhizophorae*; after examining the DMNH and AMNH series, I am at a loss to account for this statement unless Riley considered the occasional white feathers at the base of the bill of *rhizophorae* enough to constitute a "Supraloralstreif". Riley's statement is especially odd in that he examined Mearn's type series of *rhizophorae*, about which Mearns clearly wrote "From [the Celebes form] it differs in . . . wanting the whitish lores . . ."

The DMNH series from Cebu is clearly intermediate between *simplex* and *rhizophorae*. In dorsal coloration the Cebu birds are nearer to *simplex*, whereas in loreal colour they are close to *rhizophorae*. In 4 of the 10 Cebu specimens the loreal region is pale, but grey rather than white.

The AMNH series consists of 7 specimens from Luzon, 2 from Mindoro, 3 from Negros, 3 from Sulu (= Jolo) Island, one from Saluag, Sibutu, Sulus (ex-DMNH), and 1 from "Siassi" (= Siasi) Island in the Sulus (not the Siassi Island west of New Britain in the Bismarck Archipelago). Study of this series reveals that there is a tendency for all older museum skins to turn a somewhat yellower brown dorsally. Nevertheless, the 3 old Jolo skins, though badly prepared, are clearly different from the Luzon series, being darker and richer, less yellowish or greenish brown dorsally. The one more recent specimen from the Sulus differs from a relatively recent Mindoro specimen just as in the DMNH series. The AMNH series confirms the presence of the white loreal streak in Luzon and Mindoro birds and its absence or near-absence in Sulu Archipelago birds.

The 3 specimens from the geographically intermediate island of Negros resemble the DMNH specimens from adjacent Cebu in their dorsal colour. One of these 3 has some 3 white feathers at the base of the bill on each side, one has perhaps 2 feathers white at the base only, and the third lacks any white at all in this area.

I therefore recommend that *Gerygone sulphurea rhizophorae* Mearns be revived for the Yellow-breasted Wren-Warblers of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. I have not examined specimens from Bohol (just east of Cebu), which may be expected to be intermediate between the northern and southern subspecies, just as are those of Negros and Cebu.

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The supposed occurrence of the White-necked *Picathartes Picathartes gymnocephalus* in Togo

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In the 1890's the German collector Ernst Baumann worked in the Misahohé (6° 57' N, 0° 35' E) area near Kpalimé (6° 54' N, 0° 37' E) in Togo. Misahohé is on a forested escarpment, where a forest remnant is still present today. On 26 June 1894 Baumann discovered a nest of *Picathartes gymnocephalus* containing young at "Apototsi b. [near] Leglebi" and collected an adult pair there 2 days later (Reichenow 1897: 34). The locality was described as mountainous and difficult of access. Collar & Stuart (1985), following Bannerman's (1948: 115, 117) account, imply, as he did, that 2 sites, Apotsi (*sic*, Collar & Stuart) and Leglebi were involved, and think it possible that *P. gymnocephalus* may now be extinct in Togo.

In an attempt to identify the breeding site, I have been unable to find the precise place names mentioned, but there is a Leklebi Duga at 6° 57' N, 0° 29' E in Ghana about 2 km SW of the Leklebi Dafo marked on the map of the Gold Coast in Bannerman (1931). Both these places are near Misahohé, but they are in that part of "Togoland" which voted to join Ghana in the 1956 plebiscite. In modern maps the Leklebi prefix is often dropped (only Duga or Dafo being marked) and on a 1: 50,000 map of 1952 there is a hilly area named Awatotse immediately to the NW of Duga. If I am correct in thinking that this Awatotse is the Apototsi where Baumann found his birds, then there have never been any records of *P. gymnocephalus* in what is now the Republic of Togo and so the question of its extinction there is an abstraction. Nevertheless its discovery in Togo would not be surprising, as suitable habitat remains in the Togolese part of the Atacora chain of hills from Kpalimé north to Fazao (8° 42' N, 0° 46' E).

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